

# **Minutes- Beach Commission - September 13, 2011**

## **Town Hall**

**Attending: Rian Wilkinson, Bill Seiple, John Bagwill, John Crimmins, Dave Leys, Tim Shaw, Helen Flynn, John Ceglarski, Chris Semonelli**

**1. Motion to open meeting. Meeting began at 4:37 PM**

**2. Review minutes of last three meetings:**

**a. Aug. 9, 2011- Regular Beach Comm. Meeting**

**b. Aug. 11, 2011- Meeting with RKG- Second Beach Building**

**c. Aug. 22, 2011 Public meeting- proposed Boat Ramp**

**• All minutes accepted with no changes- \*Special thanks to Maureen Maurer, Admin. Asst., for her excellent minutes – Public Meeting- Proposed Third Beach Boat Ramp.**

**Rian began the meeting with a short talk concerning the direction of the Beach Commission. He reported that the BC, with total town cooperation, has made amazing strides on improving the town's beaches. We went from "shabby" to a Top Ten N.E. Beach rating.**

**He, however, also reported that he was very disappointed in the negative trend that began with the Boat Ramp controversy. Heated disagreements and, even, arguments have become common. It's a boat ramp. Not the end of the world, and should not have such a negative influence. He felt it is fine to disagree, but move on after stating your opinion.**

**As far as the impending recommendation to the Town Council, he felt**

**all Beach Commission members should vote for what is best for the entire town, not an individual or interest group. Rian felt it time to get the fun back into the BC, after all we are working to improve the town's beaches for all, which is something we all should enjoy. Also, time to get moving on to other areas, including the proposed Second Beach building.**

**Some members felt that the original Sept. 30, 2011 proposal deadline might be a cause for some of the committee's stress.**

**3. Boat Ramp Update- Rian, quickly, addressed questions/answers that had been emailed by John Bagwill and John Ceglarski, concerning the boat ramp.**

**John Ceglarski/ Questions and Answers - see attachments.**

### **Additions/ Updated**

#### **Re-locate ramp to the St George's Property**

**Rian reported that the St. George's headmaster, Eric Peterson, was not in favor of a boat ramp on the S.G. property. (Telephone conversation with town administrator Shawn Brown) Also, Beach Commission members noted that the water, on the far East side of the parking lot is very shallow and there are large fields of eel grass.**

### **Buildings on Third Beach- Restrooms/Changing Facilities**

**Besides the problems with an est. 13' elevation, for a permanent building, Rian and Bill reported that the Planning Board and, the upcoming town comprehensive plan will be**

adamant that the beach remain as natural as possible. However, the BC will continue to investigate portable buildings etc-

**Major problem-**

Third Beach has no electricity water, or sewerage.

**\*Kayak/ Dingy**

Rack is on the 2012 project list- Rian has discussed this with Shawn Brown and it is a top priority for 2012

John Bagwill/ Questions and Answers - see attached.

**Public Input.... Several residents asked to speak before the Beach Commission**

Rex Peabody, Peabody's Beach Club, requested that the BC reconsider locating the ramp to the old Navy land. John C and Bill S said that it would be almost impossible to have all the local, state and federal agencies agree to having a boat ramp next to the ,endangered, Plover nesting area. Also, Rian felt that he doubted that the Planning Board would approve a boat ramp in the middle of an undeveloped beach.

Mr. Socce, 664 Third Beach Rd, was concerned that the 17 dedicated trailer spaces would increase. The Beach Commission said that the spaces would remain at 17. Rian also said that if there was an effort to increase the number, the beach goers would, strongly, object.

**Mr. Sheffield, Middletown resident, was concerned about the dune conservation- referring to damage done by the 1938 hurricane. Rian said there has been an extensive conservation plan and 50,000 dune grass plants have been planted in the last 8 years. Also, students from St. George's school will soon be assisting in erecting snow fence on the 2 beaches. Hurricane damage, to the dunes, was only minor due to this extensive conservation program.**

#### **4. Boat Ramp update- continued.**

**Rian passed out an information paper (see attached) describing the town council's charge to the BC to vote on the proposal for a Third Beach Boat Ramp - only.**

**Also, the Beach Commission involvement with financial matters- All financials are the sole responsibility of the Finance Dept., Town Administrator and Town Council- not the Beach Commission.**

##### **Concept- Boat Ramp Facility**

- Handicap accessible**
- Temporary Boat Tie Up for recreation and rescue craft. This would, also, allow safe and comfortable access for all.**
- Floating Docks- with pilings- NOT piers**
- No pump out station.**
- No pier system**

**This concept would be based on the Fort Adams boat ramp or similar. There would be approximately 4-5, 20' floats and the total length, from the parking lot to the end of last float should be 216' or**

less. ( see photo attached)

## **Discussion Points**

- **DEM - fee ramifications**

The town has contacted DEM concerning any parking fee ramifications concerning the acceptance of state funding- approximately \$375,000.00. Hopefully, an answer will be received by 10/1/2011.

Rian said one possible option would be to allow all trailers in at no charge- resident/non-resident. If 700 non- resident trailers were allowed in at an average cost of \$12.00, the total cost \$8400.00/season. It would take approximately 50 years before the town “lost” any money on a \$375,000 Grant- and there would be no adverse affects to the residents. This, however, would be only one possible option that the Town Council should consider, once all the facts are known.

- **Fees**

John Bagwill felt the BC should set fees at the Third Beach Ramp- Suggesting that trailers might be charged 2x the cost of a car because they take up 2 spaces. Rian reiterated that the BC has not and can't set fees. They are the sole responsibility of the town council, finance department and town administrator. Income from the town's beach facility, including parking fees, contracts and the camp-ground are an important part of the town budget. The BC is an advisory board only- no exceptions.

- **Handicap Access**

Accepting any state funding, means incorporating handicap access into the boat ramp- Handicap accessibility, whenever possible, is also encouraged in the town's comprehensive plan. Floating docks would also allow safer access for all boaters, including rescue personnel, elderly and young

John Bagwill noted the present boat ramp is handicap accessible. However, Bill S. replied that the present ramp may be handicap compatible, but it is almost impossible to get anyone, safely, into a boat from a wheelchair.

Consensus- if the town is going this far, they should incorporate provisions for handicap access.

- **Proposal- Schedule**

Rian felt that, with the exception of the DEM information, all questions have been answered- in some cases several times. The BC has, already, postponed making a decision for 2 months. The town council and planning board are expecting a concept proposal in Oct. Rian felt drawings similar to the original would be acceptable. John Bagwill said the planning board needs drawings with extensive detail. Rian will check and get back to the BC.

It was agreed that further delay will not have any positive benefits. John Bagwill felt postponing the decision would be appropriate. However, the BC decided to move forward with the recommendation- John Ceglarski volunteered to write a concept proposal. (To be forwarded to the town council for the 10/17 town council meeting.)

- **Miscellaneous-** John Bagwill also asked when he would receive an answer to his question concerning liability insurance premiums. Rian will contact Shawn Brown and get back to the Beach Commission.

#### **Boat Ramp Proposal- Major Points**

- **Floating docks-** with pilings- not piers
- **Temporary tie up facilities-** handicap accessible
- **EXCLUSIONS**

**1- Pier system**

**2- Pump-out Station**

- **Fees**

**Fee structure-** the town council will have to, thoroughly, review all considerations concerning accepting federal/state funding.

All members agreed that this was a very productive, as well as, courteous meeting.

**Meeting adjourned 6:07 PM**

**Following pages are Q & A attachments**

**John-**

**Some of these items have already been reviewed---here goes.**

**1- Concept only-** as explained by Shawn at the meeting.

**2- Fixed timber pier and pump out NOT required. Shawn/Warren showed several examples of floating docks that would, probably, work very well. Ft Adams is another good example. A BRIEF boat ramp review is listed on the agenda. I believe if we can move quickly, we can, at least, address most of your concerns.**

**3- Fee schedule- The BC does not recommend fees- that is the councils responsibility. It is part of the town budget.**

**4- Alternate site- It is my strong opinion that none of the four agencies – DEM, CRMC, NBS, or NFW would allow a boat ramp near the site of the endangered species (Navy Beach). The NBS has, in the past, rejected the site as a danger to hatching plovers. One year of absence would not, I believe, change their position. \*\* We would hope, with a new boat ramp, to divide the beach more efficiently. Swimmers on the left (public beach side) and boats on the right (Sachuest Point side). Also, a dock, with temporary tie-up, facilities would get more boats off the beach.**

**5- Warren gave annual cost estimates for a fixed timber pier at the open meeting- with a probable, smaller version- costs should be less.**